

## Message Text

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R 131549Z MAR 78  
FM AMEMBASSY OSLO  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5426  
USMISSION USNATO  
INFO SECDEF WASHDC  
OJCS WASHDC  
USCINCLANTFLT NORFOLK VA  
USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GE  
AMEMBASSY BONN  
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS  
AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN  
AMEMBASSY HELSINKI  
AMEMBASSY LONDON  
USNMR SHAPE  
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW  
AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK  
DIA WASHDC  
AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM  
AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 3 OSLO 1234

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: MARR, MPOL, NO  
SUBJECT: FACTORS AFFECTING NORWEGIAN DEFENSE POLICY DECISION  
MAKERS

REF: (A) OSLO 77 5509 (NOTAL), (B) OSLO 77 5104 (NOTAL),  
(C) OSLO 0778 (NOTAL), (D) BRUSSELS 01809 (NOTAL)  
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BEGIN SUMMARY

THE ECONOMIC DIFFICULTIES NORWAY IS NOW EXPERIENCING AND  
THE STEPS THE GOVERNMENT IS BEGINNING TO TAKE TO CORRECT THE  
SITUATION, WILL WE EXPECT, TAKE THEIR TOLL FROM THE  
COUNTRY'S DEFENSE EFFORT. THIS NEGATIVE IMPACT WILL PRO-

BABLY BE FELT FOR THE NEXT 12-18 MONTHS. A SECOND FACTOR THAT COULD EXERT A LONGER TERM AND MORE SUBTLE INFLUENCE ON DEFENSE POLICY PLANNERS AND POLICY MAKERS IS THE PUBLIC DEBATE NOW GOING ON PROMINENT LABOR AND CONSERVATIVE PARTY SPOKESMEN AND JOURNALISTS, ON THE IMPORTANCE OF NORWAY TO THE ALLIANCE AND THE VALIDITY OF ITS PRESENT NORTHERN DEFENSE POSTURE. A FURTHER COINCIDENT ELEMENT CONTRIBUTING TO THE GENERAL ATMOSPHERE HAS BEEN THE CRITICISM SURROUNDING THE GON'S HANDLING OF RELATIONS WITH THE SOVIETS WHICH HAS RAISED THE CENTRAL ISSUE OF WHAT NORWAY'S STANCE VIS-A-VIS ITS SUPER POWER NEIGHBOR (AND MAJOR POTENTIAL ADVERSARY) SHOULD BE. WE HAVE CONCLUDED THAT NORWAY IS ENTERING A REFLECTIVE PERIOD IN ITS NATIONAL LIFE DURING WHICH BASIC FOREIGN AND SDCURITY PRINCIPLES WILL BE EXAMINED. STRONG, VISIBLE SUPPORT FROM THE UNITED STATES AND AN EFFECTIVE DEEPENING OF NORWAY'S INVOLVEMENT IN ALLIANCE AND WESTERN EUROPEAN AFFAIRS WOULD SERVE TO CONFIRM THE COUNTRY IN ITS POST WAR ORIENTATION. SUCH ACTIONS WOULD FURTHER HELP DEFENSE-MINDED NORWEGIAN POLITICIANS TO CONVINCE THEIR MORE RELUCTANT INWARD-LOOKING COLLEAGUES TO OPEN THE NATIONAL PURSE WIDER FOR MILITARY SEPNDING EVEN AT THE EXPENSE OF OTHER NATIONA, PROGRAMS. END SUMMARY.

1. SEVERAL DEVELOPMENTS HAVE TAKEN PLACE DURING THE LAST SIX MONTHS WHICH COULD NEGATIVELY AFFECT NORWAY'S DEFENSE EFFORT DURING THE NEXT FEW YEARS. THE MOST IMMEDIATE  
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INFLUENCE ON POLICY MAKERS WILL BE EXERTED BY THE NEEDS OF THE NORWEGIAN ECONOMY. THE PRIME MINISTER AND HIS SENIOR COLLEAGUES ARE TAKING TO THE HUSTINGS WITH THE SAME MESSAGE "...IT'S TIME TO TIGHTEN OUR BELTS AND TRY TO MAKE NORWEGIAN GOODS ONCE AGAIN COMPETITIVE ON THE WORLD MARKET." DEFENSE OFFICIALS ARE APPREHENSIVE THAT THE INITIAL BUDGET CUTS THEY HAVE ALREADY BEEN ASKED TO MAKE WILL GROW AS THE HARD POLITICAL CHOICES BETWEEN SLICING SOCIAL WELFARE AND OTHER NATIONAL PROGRAMS ARE FACED BY THE LABOR GOVERNMENT.

2. A SECONDARY, MORE SUBTLE INFLUENCE MAY BE FELT AS THE RESULT OF A PERSISTENT, PUBLIC DEBATE ON NORWAY'S STRATEGIC SITUATION AND ROLE WITHIN THE ALLIANCE. NORWAY'S PREMIER INTERNATIONAL SECURITY POLICY AUTHORITY DEFENSE UNDER SECRETARY JOHAN JORGEN HOLST HAS POINTED TO THE "SMALL" NUMBER OF RUSSIAN GROUND FORCES AROUND MURMANSK AND SUGGESTED THAT THIS DEMGNSTRATES RESTRAINT VIS-A-VIS NORWAY ON MOSCOW'S PART. THE GON THROUGH HOLST MAY WELL BE PUTTING MOSCOW ON NOTICE THAT NORWEGIAN RESTRAINT IN THE NORTH IS LINKED TO SOVIET RESTRAINT; HOWEVER, ANOTHER EFFECT IS TO CLOUD THE NORWEGIAN PUBLIC

PERCEPTION OF MOSCOW'S MILITARY INTENTIONS. HOLST HAS ALSO STATED THAT THE GREATER RANGE OF THE NEWEST SOVIET SLBMS MAKES IT UNNECESSARY FOR THEM TO DEPLOY THROUGH THE GIUK GAP INTO THE NORTH ATLANTIC IN ORDER TO REACH US TARGETS. PER HYSING-DAHL, CHAIRMAN OF THE STORTING (PARLIAMENT) DEFENSE COMMITTEE AND DEFENSE SPOKESMAN FOR THE CONSERVATIVE PARTY HAS EMPHASIZED WEAKNESS IN NORWEGIAN DEFENSE, HAS CALLED FOR GREATER EXPENDITURES AND HAS ALLEGED THAT HOLST'S STATEMENTS ARE INACCURATE AND POLITICALLY MOTIVATED. MEANWHILE, NORWAY'S LEADING PRESS ANALYST OF MILITARY AFFAIRS, JOHN BERG, HAS COMMENTED THAT THE MILITARY ASSETS READILY AVAILABLE ELSEWHERE IN THE USSR RENDER A LARGE MURMANSK FORCE UNNECESSARY.

3. RELATED, AND FURTHER CONFUSING THE AVERAGE NORWEGIAN AND SECRET

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POSSIBLY HIS PARLIAMENTARY REPRESENTATIVE, HAS BEEN THE APPARENT UNCERTAINTY OF THE GON'S ATTITUDE TOWARD THE SOVIET UNION. THE SO-CALLED GREY ZONE FISHERIES AGREEMENT, THE STALLED BARENTS SEA DEMARCATION LINE DISCUSSIONS, THE DECISION TO LIMIT FRG TROOP PARTICIPATION IN FUTURE NATO MANEUVERS IN NORWAY HAVE CONTRIBUTED TO SOME SKEPTICISM ABOUT THE GOVERNMENT'S SKILL IN DEALING WITH ITS SUPER POWER NEIGHBOR (OSLO 0778).

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4. WHATEVER THE RELATIVE MERITS OF THESE VARIOUS DEBATES, THEY HAVE RAISED IN THE PUBLIC'S MIND THE MILITARY IMPORTANCE OF NORWAY TO THE ALLIANCE, QUESTIONS OF SOVEIT INTENTIONS VIS-A-VIS NORWAY AND HOW MILITANT THE GON IS OR SHOULD BE IN ITS DEALINGS WITH THE RUSSIANS. THIS BACKGROUND MUSIC IS BEING PLAYED AT A TIME WHEN SACRIFICES IN NATIONAL ECONOMIC WELL-BEING ARE BEING REQUESTED WITH DEFENSE  
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SAVINGS AS AN OBVIOUS ALTERNATIVE.

5. WHILE WE AN D NATO CONTINUE TO VALUE NORWAY, IN THE DEFENSE CONTEXT, FOR ITS STRATEGIC POSITION, ITS RELATIVE ECONOMIC WEALTH (AND OIL RESOURCES) AND ITS STABLE DEMOCRATIC POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS, NORWY FOR ITS PART RELIZES THAT ALONE IT WOULD BE UNABLE TO MOUNT A CREDITABLE DEFENSE. ABSENT THE BENEFITS CONFERRED BY COLLECTIVE SECURITY, NORWAY WOULD HAVE TO REACH SOME FORM OF ACCOMMODATION WITH THE SOVIET UNION. OVER 62 PERCENT OF ADULT NORWEGIANS WERE RECORDED AS PERCEIVING THE VALUE OF NATO MEMBERSHIP IN AN JANUARY GALLUP POLL. THE ISSUE NO LONGER SEEMS TO BE THE USEFULNESS BUT THE COST OF BELONGING.

6. NORWAY'S SMALL STANDING MILITARY FORCE (36,029), TO ITS LARGE TERRITORY (386,283 SQ KM AND 3,500 KM COASTLINE) AND PROPORTIONALLY TINY POPULATION (4,054,000) UNDERSCORE THE ABSOLUTE REQUIREMENT OF TIMELY EXTERNAL REINFORCEMENTS. TO DATE, CANADA AND THE UK HAVE IDENTIFIED GROUND REINFORCEMENTS WHILE THE US HAS DESIGNATED AIR ASSETS. (OTHER POTENTIAL US REINFORCEMENTS (USMC) ARE NOT COMMITTED SOLELY TO NORWAY.) THE PROBLEMS OF TROOP AND EQUIPMENT DELIVERY, PRESTOCKAGE AND LINES OF COMMUNICATION HAVE BEGUN TO BE ADDRESSED BY NORWAY AND ITS ALLIES. THE UK AND GON RECENTLY ANNOUNCED AN AGREEMENT

TO STORE SOME SNOW VEHICLES IN NORWAY (OSLO 0872) AND DISCUSSIONS CONTINUE WITH THE CANADIANS, HOWEVER, IT ALL COSTS MONEY.

7 THE UNITED STATES FOR ITS PART IS ENGAGED IN NEGOTIATIONS WITH NORWAY TO DEVELOPE A LINES OF COMMUNICATION AGREEMENT TO FACILITATE RECEPTION OF AMERICAN RE-SECRET

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INFORCEMENTS. WE HAVE ALSO DESIGNATED SEVERAL COLOCATED OPERATING BASES IN NORWAY, EMBARKED ON A SACLANT FUEL STORAGE CONSTRUCTION PROJECT AND ARE INTRODUCING AN INCREASING NUMBER OF US TROOPS (PARTICULARLY MARINES) INTO NORWEGIAN WINTER WARFARE COURSES. AN ACTIVE ALLIANCE EXERCISE SCHEDULE ALSO EXISTS AND US SHIP VISITS CONTINUE. THERE ARE THUS A NUMBER OF SPECIFIC ALLIANCE AND US PROGRAMS ON-GOING IN NORWAY WHICH COULD BE AFFECTED BY A WEAKENING GON COMMITMENT TO AND INVESTMENT IN DEFENSE.

8. ALTHOUGH ITS'S TOO EARLY TO ATTEMPT A VERY COMPLETE GAZE AT THE CRYSTAL BALL, THERE ARE CERTAIN GON POLICY LINES, DEFENSE RELATED DECISIONS AND EVENTS WHICH WE FEEL CAN REASONABLY BE ANTICIPATED.

9. THE FIRST AND MOST IMMEDIATE GON POLICY DECISION WHICH WILL EFFECT DEFENSE PROGRAMS CONCERN THE ECEONOMY. IN GENERAL, WE FEEL THAT THE GROWING NATIONAL AWARENESS OF ECONOMIC PROBLEMS AND ACCOMPANYING GOVERNMENT EFFORTS TO KEEP THE LID ON WAGES WILL RESULT IN PUBLIC AND POLITICAL PRESSURE TO SIMILARLY TAMP DOWN GOVERNMENT SECTOR SPENDING. THE GROWING DEFENSE GUDGET (THE GUDGET FOR FISCAL YEAR ENDING DEC 21, 1977 WAS 1,102.69 MILLION DOLLARS) WILL BE AN ATTRACTIVE TARGET, PARTICULARLY AT A TIME WHEN RELATIONS BETWEEN NORWAY AND THE MAJOR POTENTIAL AGGRESSOR ARE PAINTED AS SOMEWHAT LESS THREATENING THAN USUAL.

10. THE BROADER GON ECONOMIC PROGRAM WILL CALL FOR DEFERRAL OF MAJOR SPENDING PROJECTS, EXCEPT PLANNED INVESTMENTS IN NORTH SEA OIL DEVELOPMENT, TO HELP MODERATE PRICE/WAGE PRESSURES. PRIVATELY, WE ARE TOLD THAT THE GON HOPES TO RESIST PRESSURES TO DO SOMETHING ABOUT UNEMPLOYMENT FOR AT LEAST TWELVE MORE MONTHS. THEN, WHEN PRESSURES FOR MORE JOBS BECOME IRRESISTABLE FOR THE LABOR GOVERNMENT, PROGRAMS IN-SECRET

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VOLVING SUBSTANTIAL SPENDING CAN BEGIN TO BE UNDERTAKEN  
ONCE MORE.

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11. MORE SPECIFICALLY, WE FEEL THAT THE IMPACT OF THESE  
DEVELOPMENTS IN THE DEFENSE AREA WILL BE FELT AS FOLLOWS:  
-- A CONTINUED DELAY OF THE PUBLICATION OF THE DEFENSE  
REVIEW COMMISSION REPORT. IT HAS NOW BEEN POSTPONED  
UNTIL APRIL 27. WE UNDERSTAND THAT THE COMMISSION'S  
RECOMMENDATION FOR GREATER DEFENSE EFFORTS, INCLUDING  
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4.5 PERCENT REAL INCREASE IN MILITARY EXPENDITURES, WILL BE QUIETLY TABLED WHEN MADE.

-- A FALLING AWAY FROM THE GON'S COMMITMENT TO MAINTAIN A MINIMUM 3 PERCENT REAL ANNUAL INCREASE IN ITS DEFENSE GUDGET. WE WERE RECENTLY TOLD THAT THE MOD HAS BEEN ASKED TO CUT NK 200 MILLION FROM ITS CURRENT AUTHORIZATION (THEY ARE HOPING TO TAKE IT FROM THE COAST GUARD AND RESERVE REFRESHER TRAINING APPROPRIATIONS) AND THAT FOR THE NEXT TWO YEARS, AT LEAST, THE COUNTRY WILL BE UNABLE TO REACH THE THREE PERCENT INCREASE.

-- FURTHER CUTS IN OPERATIONAL AND TRAINING FUNDS IN THE DEFENSE GUDGET AS THE INVESTMENT SHARE IS ALREADY COMMITTED TO THE F-16 PURCHASE.

-- THE ADOPTION OF AN ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE LON-TERM INITIATIVES PROGRAM SIMILAR TO THAT REPORTED IN BRUSSELS' 01809 E.E. THAT THE COUNTRY'S ECONOMIC PLIGHT RENDERS AGREEMENT TO DO MORE THAN STUDY THE ACTION PROGRAM UNLIKELY.

--THE POSTPONEMENT OF MAJOR NEW EQUIPMENT PURCHASES AND UPGRADES SUCH AS PATRIOT AIR DEFENSE MISSLE SYSTEM AND KOBLEN CLASS SUBMARINES. WE HAVE BEEN INFORMED THAT THE ROLAND PURCHASE WILL PROBABLY NOT BE AFFECTED.

-- A MUCH INCREASED INTEREST IN ANY COPRODUCTION POSSIBILITIES THAT MIGHT STIMULATE ADDITIONAL JOBS IN NORWAY.

02. THE GON IS CONFRONTING DIFFICULT DECISIONS THAT WILL REQUIRE INTER ALIA A PRIORITIZATION OF NATIONAL PROGRAMS INCLUDING DEFENSE AD THE ALLOCATION OF RESOURCES (NO LONGER VIEWED AS VIRTUALLY LIMITLESS) AGAINST THAT ORDERING. THESE JUDGMENTS WILL BE MADE AGAINST A BACKGROUND OF PUBLIC AND PRIVATE DISAGREEMENT OVER NORWAY'S IMPORTANCE TO THE  
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ALLIANCE, THE VALIDITY OF ITS NORTHERN DEFENSE CONCEPT THE SERIOUSNESS OF THE SOVIET THREAT AND NORWAY'S PROPER ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE PRINCIPAL POTENTIAL AGGRESSTR. WHAT APPROACHES NORWEGIAN POLICY MAKERS AND POLITICIANS ADOPT TO DEAL WITH THESE ISSUES CAN NOT HELP BUT AFFECT US AND ALLIANCE INTERESTS. THE EROSION OF COHESION AND COMMITMENT TO THE 3 PERCENT GOAL WHICH NORWAY'S ANTICIPATED COURSE OVER THE NEXT FEW MONTHS WOULD REPRESENT, COULD AFFECT NORWAY'S ATTITUDE TOWARD THE WASHINGTON SUMMIT AND FOLLOW-ON ACTIVITIES SUCH AS THE LONG TERM PROGRAM.

13. WE BELIEVE THEREFORE THAT ALLIED (AND AMERICAN) AND NORWEGIAN INTERESTS WOULD BE BEST SERVED BY AN APPROACH THAT COMBINES PUBLIC MANIFESTATIONS OF US SUPPORT FOR NORWAY AND ITS DEFENSE EFFORT TOGETHER WITH ALLIANCE PRESSURE TO MAINTAIN AND INCREASE ITS DEFENSE OUTLAYS, PARTICULARLY IN AREAS IDENTIFIED BY NATO AS REQUIRING SPECIAL ATTENTION (AIR-FIELD DEFENSE, REINFORCEMENT RECEPTION, ETC.)

14. US BOLSTERING WOULD SERVE NOT ONLY TO ENCOURAGE NORWAY TO MAINTAIN AND INCREASE ITS MILITARY EXPENDITURE BUT WOULD ALSO COUNTERBALANCE THE RECENT NEAR MONOPOLY ON THE PUBLIC CONSCIOUSNESS HELD BY THE NORWEGIAN/SOVIET RELATIONSHIP. STATEMENTS/VISITS BY SENIOR USG OFFICIALS, A MORE REGULARIZED PATTERN OF SHIP VISITS, TO INCLUDE HIGHLY VISIBLE CVAS OR OTHER SHIPS AND MORE EFFORTS TOWARD COPRODUCTION WOULD HELP. WE MIGHT ALSO BEGIN DISCUSSING SPECIFIC ITEMS RELATED TO OUR ROLE AS A MAJOR REINFORCER OF THE NORTHERN FLANK DESIGNATION OF US UNITS, PREPOSITIONING OF THEIR EQUIPMENT, STORAGE OF LOC OR COB SUPPLIES, ISSUES ADDRESSED IN THIS POST'S ANNAAL ASSESSMENT AND TO BE TREATED IN MORE DETAIL IN SUBSEQUENT MESSAGES.

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